

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

A base station node (28) of a radio access network determines a number of connections that can be added for each of plural spreading factors to the base station node, and sends to a radio network controller (RNC) node (26) a capacity indication (110) including the determined number of connections. In a first message mode of the invention, the capacity indication is included in a conventional 3GPP "Resource Status Indication" message, while in a second message mode the capacity indication is included in a separate supplemental message known as the capacity message. To prepare the capacity indication, the base station tracks actual usage of base station resources for determining the number of connections that can be added to the base station node, and assesses the capability of the base station node to add new connections. The new connection assessment takes into consideration any fragmentation issues or combinations of connection types occurring at the base station node, and therefore provides an accurate indication of the potential additional capacity of the base station node.

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